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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/672,140	09/26/2003	Michael B. Timmons	1153.066US2	8068
21186	7590	06/01/2005	EXAMINER	
SCHWEGMAN, LUNDBERG, WOESSNER & KLUTH, P.A. P.O. BOX 2938 MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402-0938			POPOVICS, ROBERT J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER

1724

DATE MAILED: 06/01/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/672,140

Applicant(s)

TIMMONS, MICHAEL B.

Examiner

Robert J. Popovics

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 February 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 9/26/03.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

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DETAILED ACTION

Priority

Applicant is requested to update the status (i.e., insert, **“now U.S. Patent 6,666,965”** where appropriate) of the parent application in the specification.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1-14 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-7 of U.S. Patent No. 6,666,965. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the claims are fully encompassed by claims 1-7 of the '965 patent.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claims 2,5 and 8-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In claims 2 and 5, the recitation **“the microbeads”** appears to lack clear positive antecedent basis. Moreover, it is unclear what Applicant intends by the recitation **“microbeads.”**

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

Claims 1 and 6 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by **Sutphin (US 4,231,863)**. See the Abstract, Figure 1, col. 1, lines 5-15, col. 2, lines 50-55 (shapes).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 2-5 and 7-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over **Sutphin (US 4,231,863)**. See the Abstract, Figure 1, col. 1, lines 5-15, col. 2, lines 50-55 (shapes). The specific dimensions, density, depth and hydraulic loading area, absent a showing of unexpected results specifically associated therewith, are submitted to be met by Sutphin, which appears to be silent with respect to these parameters. Alternatively, these parameters, absent a showing of unexpected results specifically associated therewith, are submitted to be parameters that would have been routinely optimized by one of ordinary skill in the art.

See:

In Gardner v. TEC Systems, Inc., 725 F.2d 1338, 220 USPQ 777 (Fed. Cir. 1984), cert. denied, 469 U.S. 830, 225 USPQ 232 (1984), the Federal Circuit held that, where the only difference between the prior art and the claims was a recitation of relative dimensions of the claimed device and a device having the claimed relative dimensions would not perform differently than the prior art device, the claimed device was not patentably distinct from the prior art device.

Claims 2-5 and 7-14 are **alternatively** rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over **Sutphin (US 4,231,863)** and **Geiser** (either of US 5,413,749 or 6,391,448). See the Abstract, Figure 1, col. 1, lines 5-15, col. 2, lines 50-55 (shapes) of Sutphin. It is submitted that it would have been obvious to employ the beads of Geiser in the apparatus of Sutphin, since Sutphin optionally teaches the use of such.

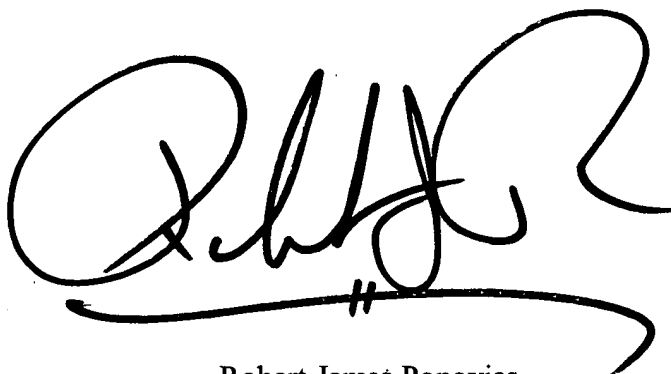
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The specific dimensions, density, depth and hydraulic loading area, absent a showing of unexpected results specifically associated therewith, are submitted to be met by the combination of Sutphin and Geiser. Alternatively, these parameters, absent a showing of unexpected results specifically associated therewith, are submitted to be parameters that would have been routinely optimized by one of ordinary skill in the art.

See:

In Gardner v. TEC Systems, Inc., 725 F.2d 1338, 220 USPQ 777 (Fed. Cir. 1984), cert. denied, 469 U.S. 830, 225 USPQ 232 (1984), the Federal Circuit held that, where the only difference between the prior art and the claims was a recitation of relative dimensions of the claimed device and a device having the claimed relative dimensions would not perform differently than the prior art device, the claimed device was not patentably distinct from the prior art device.

Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Robert J. Popovics at telephone number (571) 272-1164.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. J. Popovics', with a large, stylized flourish underneath.

Robert James Popovics
Primary Examiner
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May 30, 2005